D7.1 Recommendations and guidelines for IT Management on implementing interoperability actions in healthcare organisations

Information Note

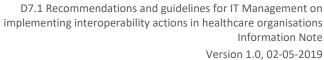## WP7 – Overcoming implementation challenges

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For Information

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Purpose

eHealth interoperability has been supported so far by a number of enabling policy decisions and actionable guidelines of the eHealth Network addressing policy making and implementation challenges at national level. It is at this level where several actors must be engaged and align efforts under national eHealth interoperability frameworks in order to achieve meaningful sharing of health data across borders.

Semantic and technical interoperability in particular is largely operationalised at the level of healthcare providers who rely on the availability of, and accessibility to, international resources in the form of standards, profiles and other interoperability assets which can serve their specific interoperability objectives.

There has been significant progress over the last decade in making interoperability a key enabler for eHealth; likewise, there have been excellent examples of achievements in terms of dematerialisation of clinical procedures within hospitals and across care providers. Task 7.1. of eHAction aims to facilitate intensified co-operation between hospitals towards greater and faster implementation, profiting from the existing legal and technical enablers and empowered by European eHealth co-operation, actively supported by the eHealth Network.

This Information Note provides information about the scope, objectives and work approach under this task, and expected deliverables to the eHealth Network over the next two years.

The eHealth Network is invited to reflect on these proposals and provide additional direction as appropriate for this work. The Members of the eHealth Network are further requested to support these efforts for jointly addressing implementation challenges; a first important objective is to secure substantial national representation of health care organisations and experts at CEO and CIO levels in the first hands-on eHealth interoperability workshop to be organised by eHAction WP7 in July 10-11, 2019 in Thessaloniki.

Scope

The work on eHealth interoperability implementation for healthcare organisations should focus on:

(i)   Facilitating the co-operation and exchange of information and good practices on employing eHealth interoperability in daily practice at the level of healthcare providers;

(ii)   Addressing eHealth interoperability implementation challenges in healthcare organisations through guidance customised to the needs of healthcare providers and their health professionals.

Objectives

I: Co-operation and Information Exchange

The first objective is to support and stimulate co-operation between hospitals in EU member states and the exchange of information and good practices that have been successfully applied

to address major digitisation and of healthcare organisations and their capacity for exchanging data with other healthcare organisation within their countries and across borders.

Article 13 of the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on European Standardisation[1] enables the identification of technical specifications that could be referred to in public tenders. The Commission Recommendation on a European Electronic Health Record exchange format[2] further proposes an Electronic Health Record exchange format with the aim to secure cross-vendor and cross-country interoperability of electronic health records and patient empowerment, through accessing and managing access to their health data. Purchasers of public services should use their buying power to stimulate the development and offering of standards-based interoperable solutions by their local health ICT industry. They should further ensure that systems purchased can provide patients access to their data (such as medical images, lab results, patient summaries, hospital discharge letters, etc) in a standardised electronic format and that they can support portability and re-hosting of medical data in compliance with standards and profiles published by the European Commission.

At the same time, the leadership in health care organisations should stimulate usability of systems to ease the entry of structured and encoded clinical data by health professionals and improve quality of data in electronic health records.

II: Address implementation challenges faced by CEOs, CIOs and clinical leaders on operationalising eHealth interoperability in hospitals in EU member states

The second objective is to create and deliver practical guidance for CEOs, CIOs and clinical leaders through a stepwise, priority-based approach.

Hospitals in EU member states are dealing with these challenges with varying degree of maturity and effectiveness.

Supporting healthcare organisations to tackle this broad spectrum of challenges at the appropriate level of granularity through European co-operation may be pursued by exploiting and building upon the existing paradigms of successful practice and through a collaborative effort to document this in a practical guide or a series of practical guides tackling specific challenges for specific groups. Issues to be addressed include procuring interoperable solutions in hospitals, operationalising interoperability in practice and promoting an interoperability culture amongst clinicians. Special attention will be also placed on interoperability for integrated services, patient empowerment, and patient-doctor communication.

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[1] Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on European standardisation, http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2012/1025/oj

[2] Commission Recommendation (EU) 2019/243 of 6 February 2019 on a European Electronic Health Record exchange format, http://data.europa.eu/eli/reco/2019/243/oj

Work Approach

The task will be implemented in the following steps:

Review of enabling EU legal and eHealth interoperability frameworks and how they are being applied today in healthcare organisations.

A consultation, that will be inspired by successful experiences in European hospitals, and a discussion with experts with responsibility to procure, operationalise and deploy ICT systems collecting and managing health data in hospitals, will provide the general framework for identifying the burning issues to be supported through practical guidance. This process will be launched in the First eHAction Interoperability Workshop, in July 10-11, 2019 in Thessaloniki, Greece. This discussion will be structured along the following priorities:

- Procurement for eHealth Interoperability

- Interoperability in the daily practice of health professionals and other healthcare employees

- Hospitals' role in integrated care and in supporting active participation and communication of patients with their care teams.

A first edition of the guide, covering at least two of these priorities, will be ready for submission to the eHealth Network in Autumn 2019. Additional topics will be added to the guide over the duration of the Action.

Main challenges and risks

Without proper interventions at the right level of implementation of good interoperability practices, the long-term objective of meaningful data sharing across national and professional boundaries and the significant potential of harvesting knowledge out of health data will not be reached.

Next Steps

➢ First eHAction eHealth Interoperability Workshop, July 10-11, 2019, in Thessaloniki, Greece.

➢ Sharing the outcomes (deliverables) of this Task with all interested parties.

➢ Expansion of the knowledge gained in this Task, through a broad exchange with the relevant communities.

➢ The guide for healthcare providers after adoption from eHN shall be published and communicated to all IT staff of large healthcare organisations and relevant external parties.

➢ The guide shall be reviewed at planned intervals or if significant technological or legal changes occur, to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness.